



A FIRST BREATH SUCCESS STORY



By Keisha Rovick

ST. CROIX COUNTY - Melissa, 19, was a pack a day smoker who has been smoking since she was 12 years old. She has quit once before, but started smoking again three months later. When Melissa learned she was pregnant, right away she started working on cutting back how many cigarettes she smoked each day. "I knew that smoking cigarettes was bad for my baby, so I knew that I needed to start cutting back," Melissa said.

At one of Melissa's visits to the WIC clinic, her nurse told her about *First Breath* and some of the negative effects of smoking during pregnancy. "The most shocking thing that the nurse told me about is all of the chemicals that my baby would breathe in from the cigarettes. It was just disgusting!"

Within a month Melissa had cut back to smoking only two or three cigarettes a day. "It was still hard because when I got stressed out I wanted a cigarette," Melissa said.

But, then Melissa went out on a limb and did something that helped her quit completely. Melissa heard about a hypnotist who was going to be coming to town in May. She had heard about quitting smoking by being hypnotized and several people, including her WIC nurse, told her that she should give it a try. So, Melissa and her mom went to the hypnotism session and Melissa has not had a cigarette since. "The whole thing was really traumatic. My mom didn't really think that the hypnotism was going to work, so it hasn't helped her. But, I believed that it would work and it did," Melissa said.

Now seven months pregnant, Melissa said she still has some cravings, but both of her roommates have been very supportive and don't let Melissa have any cigarettes. "Neither of my roommates smoke and I have told them never to give me a cigarette even if I ask for one," she said.

Although Melissa still has some cravings she said it is a lot easier than she thought it would be. "I don't go totally nuts anymore when I have a craving for a cigarette. My nurse told me that the cravings only last about 20 minutes. I figure the least I can do for my baby is to hold out and ignore my craving for those 20 minutes and not have a cigarette," Melissa said.

Being successful in quitting this time is especially important for Melissa because her baby's health is extra incentive. "I want my baby to have a healthy start and to have a healthy mom, so I'm not going to smoke again," she said.